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## NATIONAL SURVEY SHOWS ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE HAS STRONG IMPACT ON WORKPLACE

### CO-WORKERS DON'T TALK ABOUT THE ISSUE

#### Hazelden's New Guide Offers Recommendations For Employers and Employees

(Minneapolis) - - October 22, 1996 - - While the "three martini lunch" may no longer play the role in corporate culture that it once did, most people still know someone who has come to work under the influence of alcohol, according to a new national poll. And despite the belief that even one drink impairs the work performance of one's colleagues, the poll shows that very few people have ever approached a co-worker about his or her drug or alcohol use.

In the poll, conducted by the Minnesota-based Hazelden Foundation, six out of ten respondents (61 percent) said they know people who have gone to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The figures were even higher among men (69 percent) and among individuals aged 45-54 (73 percent).

According to national statistics, alcohol and drug use costs employers \$200 billion in lost productivity, medical claims and accidents each year. "Alcohol or drug abuse is an issue that every employer needs to face head on," says Tim Plant, Hazelden senior vice president. "Employers must realize alcohol or drug abuse is like any other health condition. If an employee isn't healthy, there is no way he or she can work to the best of his or her ability. Often personal job satisfaction suffers as well as the productivity of co-workers who may become concerned and want to help."

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### **Alcohol Affects Productivity; Yet Talking About it it Still Taboo**

According to the Hazelden survey, six out of ten respondents believe that having **one drink** during the workday somewhat or greatly impairs an employee's ability to do his or her job. Ninety percent of respondents said that consuming **more than one drink** during a workday would somewhat or greatly impair job performance.

Yet despite the tremendous impact of drugs and alcohol on the workplace in terms of lost productivity and increased health care costs, less than 20 percent of survey respondents have ever approached a co-worker to discuss his or her substance abuse. "Substance abuse is still a very sensitive subject, particularly in the workplace where supervisors or colleagues may be hesitant to interfere in what is often viewed as a 'personal' matter," says Plant. But the stakes are high, he added. "If you wait to act until after a serious workplace accident or other mishap, you've waited too long."

Practical experience shows workplace interventions can be very effective if done appropriately, says Jack Longie, Employee Advisory Resource substance abuse consultant, at the Minneapolis-based Ceridian Corporation. Ceridian, which has had an active EAP for more than 20 years, now offers similar services to more than 1500 companies throughout the country.

According to Longie, employees can be hesitant to ask for **the** help, feeling that they should be able to control alcohol or other drug use on their own. They sometimes fear that in asking for help, somehow the company could learn that they have a problem and that their jobs could be jeopardized. "Employers today are in a powerful position to improve lives and save jobs by working together with employees, offering resources, and assuring employees that jobs will not be jeopardized in seeking or accepting assistance."

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### *Addiction in the Workplace/3*

#### Hazelden Offers Free Guide to Help

Hazelden is offering a new free booklet, *Talking About Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace*, that contains information about how employers should approach an employee whose job performance is suffering due to use of alcohol and drugs. The new guide also lists recommendations on how employees can approach co-workers to discuss alcohol or drug abuse and outlines a list of resources to contact for additional information. *Talking About Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace* is available by calling Hazelden's toll-free helpline, 1-800-I-DO-CARE.

According to the Hazelden guide, employers concerned about an employee's drug or alcohol use should:

- Work together with professionals in the company or associated with the company who can offer advice about how to talk to an employee who has problems and what specific resources are available to help.
- Educate employees about company policies regarding alcohol or drug use, including Drug Free Workplace requirements.
- Document an employee's work performance -- good and bad -- to track any change in an employee's performance.
- Warn an employee about his or her unsatisfactory job performance, communicate expectations and discuss the consequences.
- Intervene quickly. The sooner an employer talks with an employee, the sooner he or she can get help.
- Make sure the extent of any problem is determined through professional assessment.
- Follow up and offer appropriate support.

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## Employers Can Help Employees Overcome Alcohol or Drug Dependency

Survey respondents felt companies could provide a number of resources to help employees overcome their drug and alcohol problems. These resources include employee assistance programs (84 percent), training and education (78 percent), workplace policies (73 percent), and accessible managers (68.5 percent).

Statistics show a growing number of companies are offering Employee Assistance Programs to employees. In fact, the Employee Assistance Professional Association estimates that about 20,000 EAPs exist across the country, and more than sixty percent of employees, and frequently their families, have access to these programs. Many unions and other employee associations also have programs, both formal and informal, designed to deal with substance abuse issues.

Yet many workers are hesitant to take advantage of these services because they are nervous that their involvement will hurt them professionally, according to Plant. "It's essential that employers inform their workers about the availability and confidentiality of such programs," says Plant. "Human resources are a company's strongest asset, so investing in their physical and mental health makes good business sense."

"Employers have an obligation to approach employees if their drug or alcohol use is or may be affecting their work and the work of colleagues," says Plant. "Such an intervention shows that the company cares about the health and well-being of its employees. Studies also show that helping employees return to their job is a smart business decision and saves time and resources a company would need to devote to hiring and retraining of a new employee." In addition, employed persons often stand the best chance in treatment. "Employed workers who have the support of family and employer have the most favorable recovery outcomes," says Plant.

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## Workplace Addiction: A Cry For Help

While seven out of ten survey respondents listed job stress as one of the top reasons why employees use alcohol or drugs during work hours, most respondents recognized addiction as the number one reason why employees use alcohol or drugs on the job (90 percent).

“It’s important for companies to provide employees with simple ways to reduce stress on the job,” says Plant. “But when a person’s alcohol or drug use is affecting his or her work performance, it’s obvious that there is more to the problem than stress. Individuals who use alcohol or drugs on the job are suffering from a disease they can’t control. Alcohol or drug dependency is a cry for help that should not be ignored or dismissed by co-workers and supervisors.”

### About Hazelden

The Hazelden Foundation helps people recover from the disease of alcohol and drug dependency and related treatable illness. Recognized throughout the world as a leader, Hazelden offers individualized information, education and clinical services throughout the recovery process. Hazelden tailors specific recovery programs for men, women, adolescents, young adults and older adults in its regional sites in Minnesota, West Palm Beach, New York and Chicago.

### About the Survey

The telephone survey, conducted for the Minnesota-based Hazelden Foundation by Market Facts, Inc., polled a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults. The margin of error for the sample is plus or minus three percent.

For more information about the details of the Hazelden survey results, contact Jeff Moravec at 612/213-4228 or Trish Scorpio or Leah Kondes at 612/832-5000.



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## Hazelden Addiction in the Workplace Survey Results

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

*Hazelden Addiction in the Workplace Survey Results/2*

5. Do you ever feel compelled to consume alcohol as part of a business function?

Yes	9.6%
No	90%

6. Do you know people who have gone to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

Yes	60.9%
No	<b>38. 7%</b>

7. What effect do you think having ONE drink during the workday has on a person's ability to do his or her job?

Somewhat impairs their ability	<b>48. 5%</b>
Has no effect on their ability	<b>31. 3%</b>
Greatly impairs their ability	<b>12%</b>
Somewhat improves their ability	<b>1. 4%</b>
Greatly improves their ability	0.9%

8. What effect do you think having MORE THAN ONE drink during the workday has on a person's ability to his or her job?

Greatly impairs their ability	<b>60. 7%</b>
Somewhat impairs their ability	<b>30. 6%</b>
Has no effect on their ability	<b>2. 7%</b>
Somewhat improves their ability	<b>0. 7%</b>
Greatly improves their ability	<b>0. 3%</b>

9. Which of the following resources do you think employees need to help them overcome their alcohol or drug problems?

Employee assistance programs	<b>84%</b>
Training and education	<b>78%</b>
Workplace policies	<b>73. 2%</b>
Accessible managers	<b>68. 5%</b>